Autumn Harp

Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center

Autumn Harp, Inc.

Client Profile:
Autumn Harp, Inc., has been a cosmetic manufacturer for 27 years. The company is located in Bristol, Vermont, and employs 100 people.

Situation:
Autumn Harp had developed from a small, rural, branded cosmetics manufacturer to a 100-person OEM operation. Their information management and resource planning systems had been struggling to keep pace with the evolving company. Different departments had addressed issues by building or incorporating different solutions, resulting in multiple data entry points, inaccuracies, and difficulties in extracting data. Autumn Harp decided to replace these systems with an integrated ERP software package. Concerned about the amount of staff resources and cash outlay involved in such a major undertaking, the company turned to the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center (VMEC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance in selecting a software package to suit their needs.

Solution:
VMEC used the Soft Select system to take Autumn Harp through the process of identification and selection of software packages which satisfied their requirements. A two-stage process, Soft Select identifiied business and functionality requirements by a process of interviews with key personnel in the company. Once these responses had been tallied, the resulting data was used to generate a much more detailed survey with very specific requirements which are then matched against a database of software packages. Matches for combinations of functionality were shown in a list, typically with the top ten packages being listed for consideration by the company. Autumn Harp was already considering one package, which would not have appeared on the match list using the normal selection criteria. Using the highly customizable process, the package was included for comparison against those selected on the standard report.

Results:
*Received a report of 7 packages with 74 percent to 92 percent correlation between requirements and package functionality.
* Selected and in the process of implementing new software package.

Testimonial:
"The Soft Select process enabled us to determine what was important to us in looking for a new software package and clarified the areas where our current software package was falling short. The functional questionnaire forced us to look at the specifics of how we wanted to use information technology in our business and what software features were important to us. Once we had identified these important features, we could ensure that we were shown these features during the software

demos. The functional database feature saved us a lot of time in weeding out software packages that didn't meet our functional requirements. VMEC's Information Technology Specialist worked closely with us throughout the project and was extremely knowledgeable and helpful in guiding us through the process of picking the best ERP software package to meet our needs. VMEC's guidance and skills saved us considerable time and money on this project."

Bruce Bove, IS Manager